



Riverland/ Walnut Hill

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

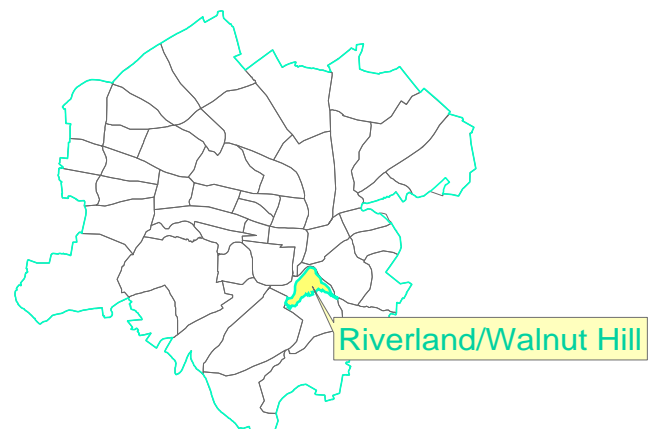
Adopted by City Council
July 19, 2004

ROANOKE
VIRGINIA



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Planning Building & Development

Introduction

The Riverland/Walnut Hill neighborhood is in the southeast section of Roanoke, nestled between the Roanoke River and Mill Mountain. It is an older, well-established residential neighborhood with a healthy housing stock. The majority of homes are single-family and the area has a high home-ownership rate. The neighborhood features a small village center and the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital.

The neighborhood grew dramatically during the first half of the century, with a large portion of homes being built in the 1920s. The neighborhood's proximity to the American Viscose Plant, the Norfolk & Western Railway shops, and downtown made it a convenient location to live and commute to work. Today, the area remains a central location to workplaces, shopping, and recreational areas. Riverland/Walnut Hill benefits from its proximity to Mill Mountain park land and the Roanoke River. The community is inherently connected to the health and vitality of these two prominent natural assets. *Vision 2001-2020*, comprehensive plan states:

"Roanoke River is an environmental and economic asset that aids to the quality of life in Roanoke."(p.44)

The neighborhood is a significant gateway community for Roanoke. Many tourists pass through the neighborhood when entering the City from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The planning staff involved the community in the development of this plan. Planners worked with residents and property owners in the fall of 2003 through a series of workshops to identify issues of concern. Community input was used to guide development of the policies and actions in the plan.



High priority initiatives

This plan proposes **six Priority Initiatives**:

- Traffic calming
- Housing maintenance and upkeep
- Encouraging a vibrant village center
- Minimizing flooding damage
- Enhancing the Walnut Avenue Gateway
- Protecting the Roanoke River and Mill Mountain

These initiatives are reflected in the policies and actions located in the Recommendations section.

Plan Elements

Discussion in this plan is organized into **six Plan Elements**:

- **Community Design** - looks at physical design and land use patterns
- **Residential Development** - addresses existing and new housing opportunities
- **Economic Development** - deals with commercial and industrial development
- **Infrastructure** - evaluates transportation systems and utility systems such as water, sewer, and storm drainage
- **Public Services** - assesses Fire/EMS, police, and other city services
- **Quality of Life** - examines recreational opportunities, environmental issues, education, and community development

Each plan element contains information about current conditions and issues.

Community Design

Physical Layout



Camilla Street is a good example of a smaller residential street

The Riverland/Walnut Hill neighborhood is situated on the north side of Mill Mountain and stretches to the lower lying area along the south bank of the Roanoke River. Most of the land has a moderate to steep grade. Approximately 37% of the land in the neighborhood is located in a flood-hazard zone. The majority of the lots are compact in size with larger parcels at the higher elevations in the neighborhood. The streets are aligned in a traditional grid pattern, although the pattern breaks in areas with steeper and varying grades throughout the neighborhood.

Route 116 follows Walnut Avenue, Piedmont Street, and Riverland Road and carries a significant amount of through traffic. Riverland Road, Walnut Avenue, and Belleview Avenue support the majority of traffic in the neighborhood.

Laurel Street is a smaller-scale collector street that provides an alternative connection for vehicles between the arterial streets in the neighborhood. Residents have concerns about the street's capacity to support the current traffic volume. This plan recommends examination of measures to mitigate traffic impacts on the street.

In general, smaller residential streets are narrow, single lane streets with parking on one or both sides. This type of street is often referred to as a "yield street"; when cars traveling in opposite directions meet, one car must yield to let the other pass. This type of street is effective in promoting neighborhood-appropriate traffic speeds.

The neighborhood has many functional alleyways. Alleys provide residents with rear access to their property and an alternative to street-side trash pickup in some cases. For functional and safety reasons, alleys should be cleared of overgrown vegetation and debris.

Walnut Avenue is a primary gateway for the neighborhood and the city providing a connection between the Blue Ridge Parkway and downtown. The Walnut Avenue Bridge is a decorative, concrete arched bridge built in 1927. It was surveyed in 1998 and appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Although some areas present challenging terrain to walk or bike, the neighborhood provides sidewalks on its larger streets and includes sections of two greenways, the Roanoke River Greenway and the Mill Mountain Greenway.



Walnut Avenue Gateway: Walnut Avenue provides a nice introduction to the City.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES:

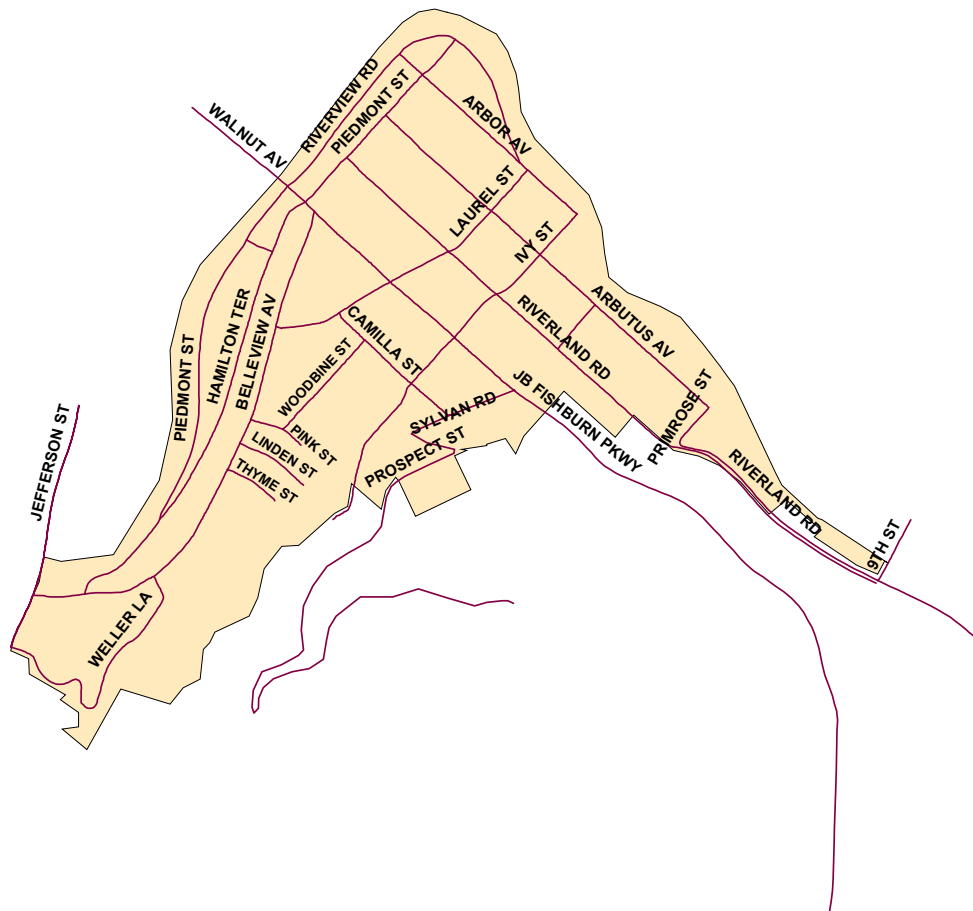
Street	Street Segment	Count
Riverland Road	9th Street to Piedmont Street	ADT 7600*
Walnut Avenue	Piedmont Street to Jefferson	ADT 5100*
Corner of Walnut Avenue and Laurel Avenue		ADT 4017**
Bellevue Avenue	Jefferson Street to Thyme Street	ADT 5278***

* 2002 VDOT Daily Traffic Volume Estimates

** 2000 City of Roanoke count

*** 2003 VDOT Count

Riverland/Walnut Hill Street System



Land Use Patterns

The land use pattern of the Riverland/Walnut Hill neighborhood is typical for a traditional neighborhood. Nearly 60% of the parcels are dedicated to single-family uses. Duplexes (two-family) comprise 14% of the uses. The heaviest concentration of duplex units are located in the 400, 500, and 600 blocks of Riverland Road, the 400 and 500 blocks of Arbutus Avenue, and along Hamilton Terrace. There are only a few multifamily developments, making up only 2% of the total land uses. The multifamily developments are smaller in size—three to eighteen units—and are concentrated on corners and along the main corridors. Neighborhood commercial development is located in a small village center at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Piedmont Street. Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital is located on the western edge of the neighborhood on over 20 acres of land.



A smaller-scale apartment complex on the corner of Walnut Avenue and Laurel Avenue.

There is one church in the neighborhood, Riverland Road Baptist Church, which is surrounded by residential uses. Over 30 percent of the properties in the area are classified as vacant. These parcels include parking lots and city-owned properties along the Roanoke River. The City acquired parcels along the river as part of the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project.

The zoning supports primarily a mix of single- and two-family uses. Of 509 parcels within the area, 42% are zoned RM-1, Residential Multifamily Low Density and 37% are zoned RS-3, Residential Single-Family. The village center is zoned CN, Neighborhood Commercial, which is appropriate for neighborhood supportive commercial activity.

One shortcoming of the current zoning ordinance is a lack of a zoning district that best accommodates institutional uses. For example, Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital is zoned C-1, Office District, which does not accurately capture its function, scale, or character. The new zoning ordinance will address such uses as the hospital by providing districts that better match the hospital's unique needs.

Since this neighborhood is nearly fully developed, future land uses are guided largely by existing land uses. Future land use recommendations reinforce the neighborhood's existing character.

Greenways

Greenways are paths designed to encourage recreation and non-motorized transportation. Greenways often use sidewalks and streets through urban areas. Both the Roanoke River Greenway and the Mill Mountain Greenway run through the neighborhood. The Mill Mountain Greenway extends from downtown to the top of Mill Mountain via Prospect Road (the old Mill Mountain toll road). The development of the greenway has provided improvements to Piedmont Park and added sidewalk along Laurel Avenue. Signs and markers help guide users along the route.

The Roanoke River Greenway, as proposed, follows the Roanoke River and will include over 1.6 miles of trail in the neighborhood once the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project is complete. An important aspect of greenways is to enable residents to enjoy Roanoke's natural resources. Currently, many people use Riverside Drive and Piedmont Street (south of Walnut Avenue) for walking, biking, and running; both streets will become part of the trail for the Roanoke River Greenway.

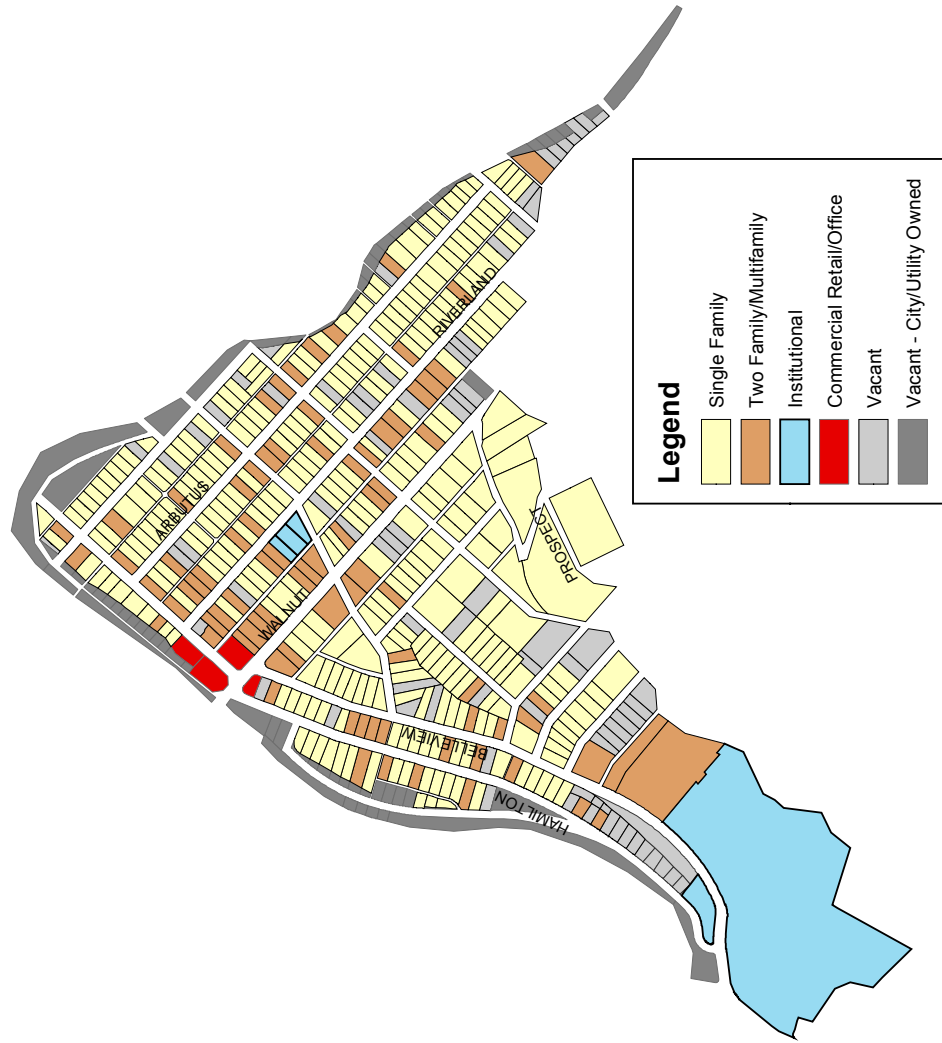


Mill Mountain Greenway signs direct users through the neighborhood.

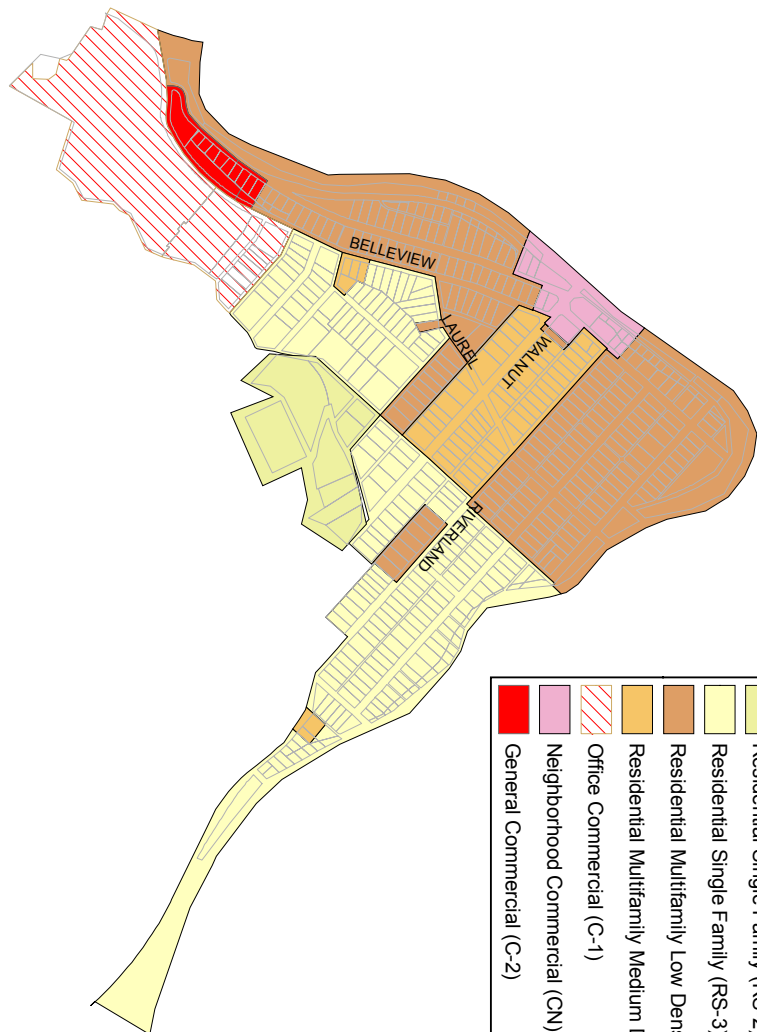
Piedmont Street is a popular recreational area and is slated to be incorporated into the proposed Roanoke River Greenway.










Riverland/Walnut Hill Current Land Use



Riverland/Walnut Hill Existing Zoning



Legend	
	Residential Single Family (RS-2)
	Residential Single Family (RS-3)
	Residential Multifamily Low Density (RM-1)
	Residential Multifamily Medium Density (RM-2)
	Office Commercial (C-1)
	Neighborhood Commercial (CN)
	General Commercial (C-2)

Residential Development

The neighborhood's oldest house on record dates to 1885. The majority of homes were built in the 1920s with the Arts and Crafts Bungalow and the American Foursquare as prominent housing types during this era. Housing development slowed in the 1930s and 1940s, but steadily increased through the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the homes built after 1950 were Cottage and Ranch styles. Today, there are few available vacant lots and new development occurs at a slow, infrequent rate. The few homes built since the 1970s are primarily split level and one-story Ranch-style homes.

The most popular exterior is brick veneer, although there is a wide assortment of exteriors which include stucco, wood siding, and vinyl siding. The majority of the homes are wood-framed and gable-roofed. The neighborhood enjoys a home-ownership rate of 71%, which has remained constant since the last census and is significantly higher than the citywide average (56%).

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES: QUICK FACTS

Most Common Exterior	Brick veneer
Most Common Construction Type	Wood-frame
Average House Value	\$79,752
Average House Size	1,512 sq. ft.
Average Lot Size	9,190 sq. ft.
Number of Bedrooms	Percentage
2-bedroom	19%
3-bedroom	55%
4-bedroom	24%
5-bedroom	1%
6-bedroom	1%

Source: *Office of Real Estate Valuation,
City of Roanoke*



The neighborhood has a diversity of housing styles.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement violations are not a significant occurrence in the neighborhood. Building maintenance, outdoor storage, and inoperable vehicle issues are addressed by code enforcement inspectors as the violations are reported to the city. The existing violations tend to be concentrated on certain blocks of Walnut, Arbutus, and Riverland and in several instances numerous violations are found at one address. Due to the aging housing stock, housing maintenance will become an increasing challenge. The neighborhood benefits from an active neighborhood organization, the Riverland Alert Neighbors. The neighborhood group continues to be vigilant of these and other quality of life issues in the area.

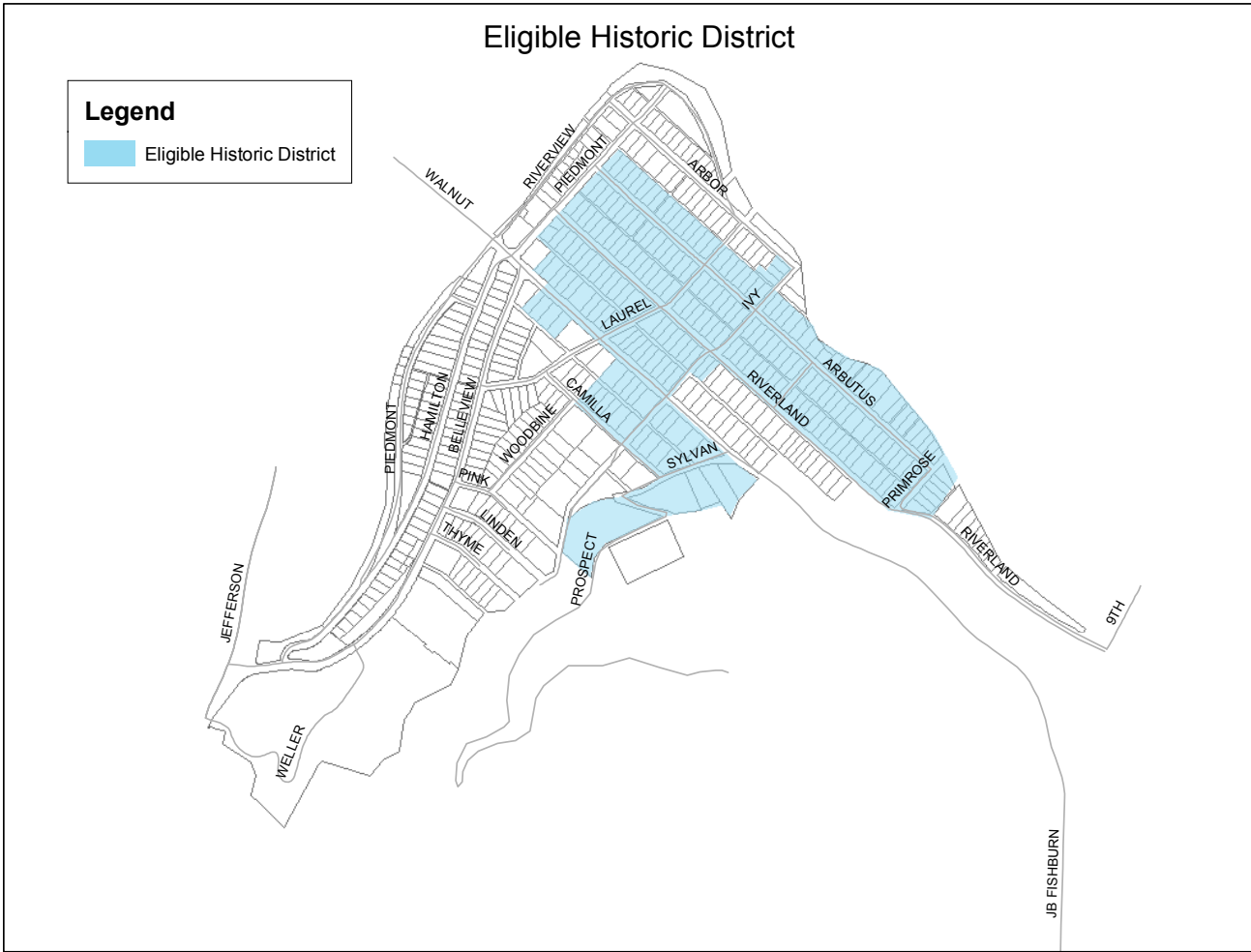
Historic Eligibility

In October 1999, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources concurred with a Virginia Department of Transportation sponsored-survey to deem eligible a Riverland historic district. The VDOT survey identified a district of 210 dwellings in a 10-block area in which the majority of houses contributed to the historic character of the neighborhood (see map). This potential district may now be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Any further study should consider the inclusion of all homes on Sylvan Road, Ivy Street, and Prospect Road. Prospect Road, the former Mill Mountain toll road, should be included for its historically significant construction features. The concrete road bed was built in 1924 by Mill Mountain developers W.P. and John Henritze. Today, the road has been paved with asphalt, however it still features the original low stone retaining wall along the mountain and a double-switchback bridge that crosses back over the lower part of the road in front of the Rockledge residence.



This ca. 1885 house on Walnut Avenue is the oldest house in the neighborhood according to City records.



New Development



A new home on Riverland Road.

The lack of available land limits new development opportunities. Many vacant lots are not suitable for development due to flood hazards or topography. In addition, residents are concerned that recent development has been inconsistent with the surrounding homes in terms of architecture and setbacks from the street. With an aging housing stock and limited vacant land for new development, additions and renovations are needed to maintain competitively valued housing options in the neighborhood.

Population

There are 1,033 people that reside in the neighborhood. The population of the area is decreasing at a slightly higher rate than the citywide population. The neighborhood experienced a 5% decrease in residents between the 1990 Census

Residents At A Glance...

	Number	Percentage	Citywide
Total Population	1033		
Gender			
Female	513	50%	53%
Male	520	50%	47%
Race			
White	965	93%	69%
Black	27	3%	27%
Other Races or Multiracial	41	4%	4%
Age			
0-17 Years Old	207	20%	25%
18-39 Years Old	328	32%	37%
40-64 Years Old	369	36%	22%
65 Years and Over	129	12%	16%

and 2000 Census. The City of Roanoke lost 1.5% percent in its population over the same time period. One possible explanation of the neighborhood's higher percentage of population loss is a national trend towards smaller household sizes, combined with minimal number of single-family home conversions to duplex and triplex units since the 1990 Census. The population of residents under the age of 40 decreased by more than 18%, while the neighborhood saw an almost 15% increase in residents over the age of 40.

Source: U.S. Census

Economic Development

Village Center

Located around the Piedmont Street and Walnut Avenue intersection, the village center is small in scale and features community-oriented businesses such as a convenience store and an ice-cream parlor/diner. Other uses include a medical supply store and an antique store. The village center offers a central location in the neighborhood and a convenient stop along Route 116. Future uses that may be compatible include a restaurant, retail store, or a professional office. The Walnut Avenue gateway from the Blue Ridge Parkway and the two greenways help generate seasonal traffic for the village center businesses. It is currently a pedestrian-friendly area. However, more and better defined walkways could enhance the safety and overall “walk-ability” of the area (see the infrastructure improvements section). The size of the village center is limited to existing parcels. Expansion of this village center is not recommended.

Griffith Roanoke Memorial Hospital, located in the southwestern portion of



Walnut Avenue and Piedmont Street Village Center.



Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital

the neighborhood, is the largest hospital in southwestern Virginia. Once a proposed expansion is complete, Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital will be the second largest hospital in Virginia. As a large employer and a main provider of healthcare, it is a critical institution to the region. Any recommendations involving the hospital should strike a balance between its needs for expansion and development to serve the region and the quality of life of the residents that are impacted by the large scale of the hospital's operations. The neighborhood continues to provide convenient housing options to hospital employees.

Riverside Centre for Research and Technology

Carilion, in partnership with the City of Roanoke, is building the Riverside Centre for Research and Technology (RCRT). RCRT, located on the north side of the Roanoke River, will provide a valuable business development space for new and existing businesses. The research park could provide job opportunities for residents and will likely increase demand and value of homes in the neighborhood.



Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital:
From this vantage point on Wiley Drive,
the hospital facade is featured with Mill
Mountain in the background.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure improvements should be compatible with and complement surrounding land use and zoning patterns. Improvements should also be compatible with the surrounding natural environment, including Roanoke River and Mill Mountain. The neighborhood features many field-stone retaining walls. These walls are design features that should be preserved.

Existing Curb

In general, most streets in the neighborhood have curbing. However, many curbs in the neighborhood are worn away considerably through settling and repaving. A standard curb height of four inches provides a greater edge for storm water run-off and discourages drivers from pulling up on the curb to park. Installation and repair of curbing along arterial streets is a priority.

Streetscapes and Traffic-Calming

Well-planned and maintained streetscapes are a signature of a healthy community. The major streets and Laurel Avenue are the top priorities for streetscape and traffic-calming improvements.

Vision 2001-2020 emphasizes improving and enhancing existing streetscapes:

Roanoke's streetscapes should be welcoming and attractive multi-modal linkages that carry vehicle traffic, pedestrians, and bicycles safely and efficiently to and from their destination.

Many steps can be taken to improve the streetscape of any given street. This section will explore recommended enhancements for the village center and other major streets. Improvement strategies for arterial streets should address the following goals:

- Promote livability and commerce
- Retain capacity to handle current and future volumes of traffic, while not inducing more traffic
- Ensure speeds are compatible with the surrounding environment
- Keep commuter traffic off of side streets
- Promote pedestrian safety

Streetscape and traffic-calming measures are a key component to meeting these goals. The following are some potential streetscape/traffic-calming tools that may be used:

- Planting large-species trees on both sides of the street
- On-street parking
- Installing curb extensions at intersections and mid-blocks to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians and define parking lanes
- Marking major pedestrian crossings

Village Center

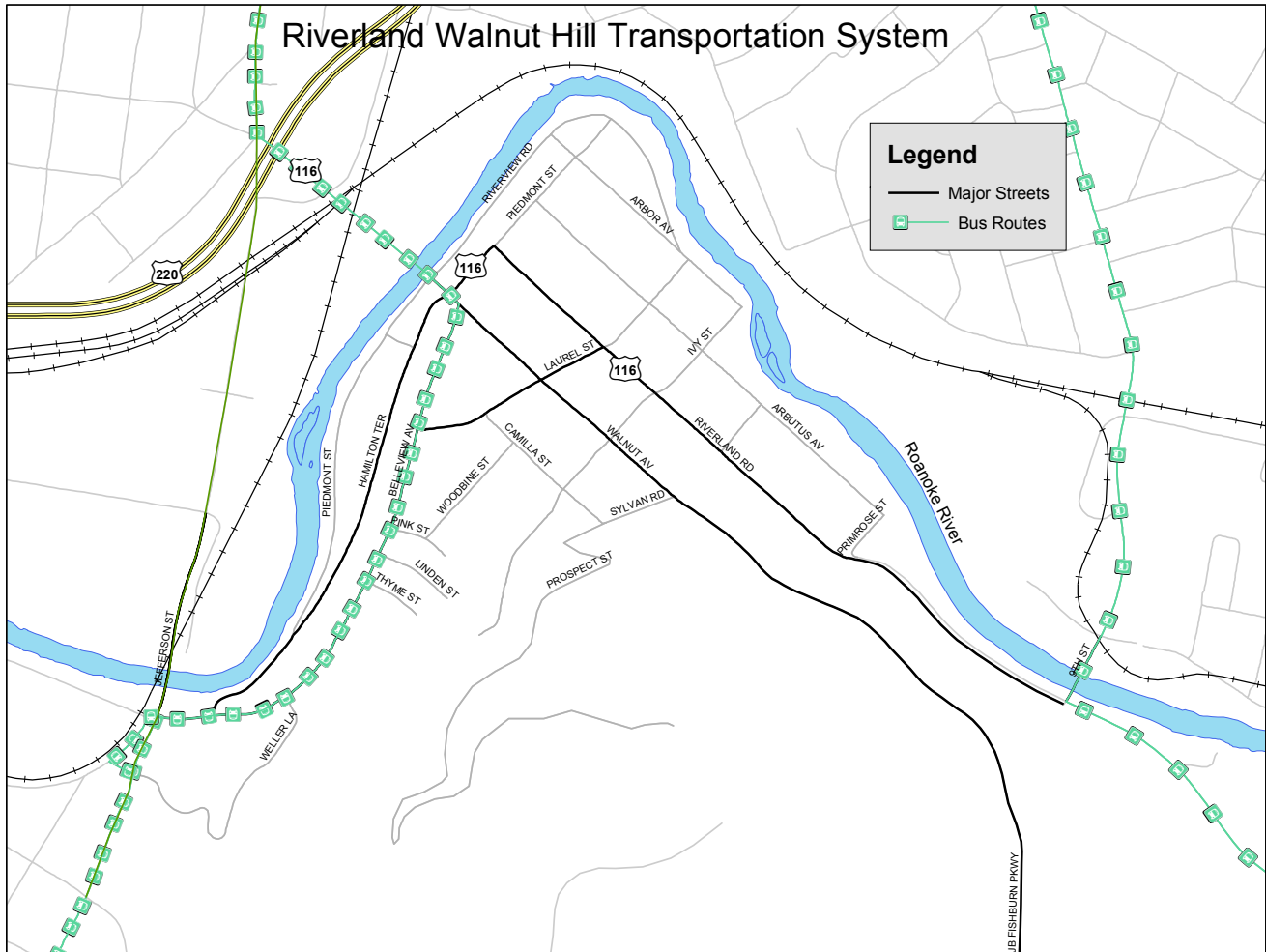
The village center extends along Walnut Avenue from Belleview Avenue to the bridge and extends down a portion of Piedmont Street. Safety, access, and mobility of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in and around the village center should be considered as key design issues. Potential improvements may include reducing turning radii to reduce speeds of turning vehicles, adding bulb-outs on corners to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, or stamped asphalt crosswalks to pronounce pedestrian walkways. Decorative light posts, street furniture, and street trees would add to the appeal of the village center. Streetscape improvements should be influenced by the historic elements of the Walnut Avenue Bridge.

Walnut Avenue Bridge

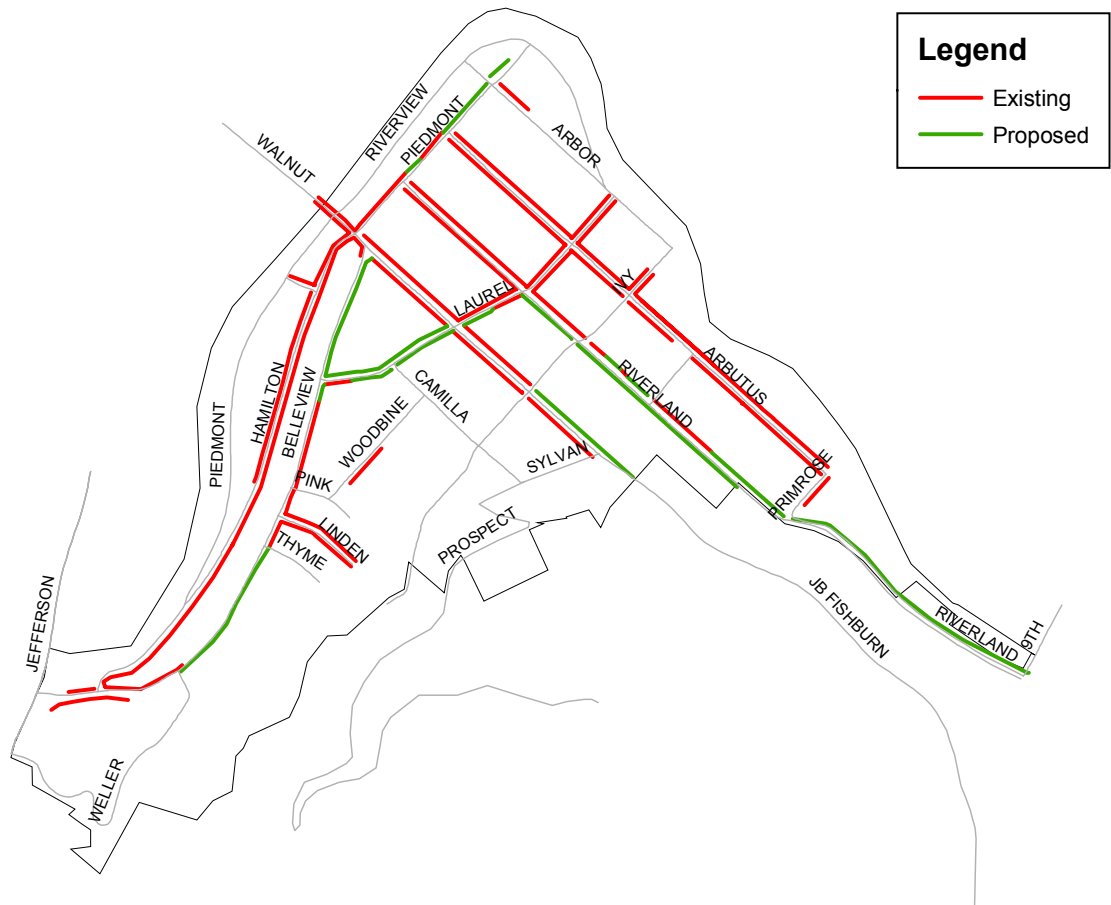
The bridge features many architecturally significant design elements including decorative lamp posts. Renovations should maintain the architectural integrity of the bridge. Any additional improvements should tie into the streetscape improvements of the village center and Walnut Avenue gateway. Improvements may be needed to maximize pedestrian safety of the walkways on the bridge.

Walnut Avenue Bridge: This view from the bridge shows the village center at the foot of the bridge and Walnut Avenue extending beyond.





Riverland/Walnut Hill Sidewalk Map



Bellevue Avenue



Bellevue Avenue: Curbing is needed to better define the street.

Bellevue Avenue is one of the busiest streets in the neighborhood.

Infrastructure improvements can assist with slowing the speed of traffic, enhancing the residential character, and creating a more pedestrian friendly corridor.

Additional recommendations include:

- Continue traffic lane markings along the entire street. Currently, markings exist from Jefferson Street to Thyme Street. Markings should continue to Walnut Avenue.
- Infill sidewalk and curbs along the south side blocks to create continuous sidewalk from Walnut Avenue to Jefferson Street (See sidewalk map).
- Curbing should be installed along the north side of Bellevue Avenue. Sidewalk is not recommended given the street abuts the rear property lines of parcels that face Hamilton Terrace. Curb and gutter is more appropriate in this instance. Stormwater runoff will be an important consideration in regard to the feasibility of implementing this improvement.
- Make intersection improvements at Bellevue and Walnut to provide a pedestrian friendly connection to the village center and Walnut Avenue bridge.
- Make improvements along western portion of Bellevue to improve pedestrian access to Jefferson Street, the Rivers Edge Sports Complex, and other recreational opportunities. Special consideration should be given to a pedestrian crossing west of the 1600 block around Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital.

On-street parking should be encouraged along the south side of Bellevue in appropriate areas.

Walnut Avenue

Walnut Avenue is a well-developed street with mature trees and an aesthetically pleasing streetscape. Suggestions focus on traffic-calming and enhancing its appeal as one of Roanoke's primary gateways :

- Add street trees where feasible. Narrow landscaping strips prohibit large species trees from being planted. Smaller, ornamental species trees may be appropriate.
- Define the edge of village center in the 400 block to provide a separation between the residential and commercial portion of Walnut Avenue. A stamped asphalt crosswalk or a bulb-out would help signify the boundary of the village center.
- Make intersection improvements at Walnut and Laurel to provide pedestrian friendly connections.
- Provide marked parking spaces. Marked spaces will encourage more frequent and efficient on-street parking. The 400 block would benefit from established parking. It will help to slow traffic coming down Mill Mountain by narrowing the travel lanes.
- Curb and sidewalk should be considered on the east side of the 600 block. This is the only block without sidewalk and curb in the residential section of Walnut Avenue. Lack of sufficient public right-of-way and grade issues may prohibit the installation of curb and sidewalk.
- A defined edge between Mill Mountain Park and the 600 block. One possibility is a curb extension on the north side of the 600 block that will make it clearer to drivers coming down from Mill Mountain that they are entering a residential area.

Riverland Road

Riverland Road supports the most traffic in the neighborhood. It is an exclusively residential area that should adequately support traffic generated by Route 116 while strengthening qualities of a residential community.



Low Curbs: Rebuilding curbs will discourage drivers from pulling onto the planting strip to park.

- Redesign terminating vista at the tee intersection of Piedmont Street and Riverland Road to improve visibility for oncoming traffic on Riverland Road and provide a safe, practical design that blends in well with the character of the neighborhood. Improvements may include:
 - Replace metal guardrail with a wooden guardrail.
 - Raise the height of the curb.
 - Move stop sign to the corner of Riverland and Piedmont.
 - Reduce excessive signage behind the guardrail.
- Sidewalks should be available on both sides of the street wherever there is sufficient right-of-way and it is otherwise feasible.
- The setback of new structures should be consistent with setbacks of surrounding homes. A consistent building line is an important design standard to maintain an attractive street front.
- Add street trees where appropriate and feasible. Impediments on Riverland are the narrow width of the planting strip and power lines on the south side of the street. The 500 through 700 blocks have the greatest need for trees.
- Curb heights should be increased. Increased curb heights will discourage individuals from pulling their vehicles up on the curb. With vehicles properly using on-street parking, travel lane widths will decrease and slow the speed of traffic.

Laurel Street



Laurel Avenue Traffic: Vehicles shown here take advantage of the well-travelled, cut-through between Bellevue Avenue and Riverland Road.

As a collector street, Laurel Street experiences a lot of cut-through traffic between Bellevue Avenue and Riverland Road. In addition, there are no sidewalks between Walnut Avenue and Bellevue Avenue. Residents consider Laurel Avenue a problem area due to the number of vehicles and lack of a safe pedestrian connection on a portion of the street. Improvements should be made to ensure that the entire street is pedestrian friendly. In addition, improvements should be made to calm the traffic and attempt to share the traffic burden with the major streets of the neighborhood. Suggested improvements include:

- Add sidewalk and curb on at least one side of the street from Walnut to Bellevue.
- Make intersection improvements at Walnut and Laurel to provide pedestrian friendly connections.
- Narrow travel lanes by using traffic-calming techniques such as bulb-outs and creating on-street parking lanes.

Sidewalk and curb should be installed on at least one side of the street from Walnut Avenue to Bellevue Avenue. Reducing the number of vehicles on the street could be accomplished by making design changes to narrow the travel lanes. A sign prohibiting trucks is posted in order to discourage commercial vehicles from taking the cut through. Residents report that the sign itself does not seem to be effective.

Hamilton Terrace

Residents mentioned the need to address the corner of Walnut Avenue and Hamilton Terrace. Drivers turning onto Walnut Avenue from Hamilton Terrace complain that their line of sight is hindered by the concrete wall of the bridge, and are unable to see oncoming traffic traveling south over the bridge. The issue may be addressed by moving the stop bar forward on Hamilton Terrace in order to create a greater line of sight.

Gateway - Walnut Avenue

For visitors exiting the Blue Ridge Parkway at Mill Mountain, Walnut Avenue is the first introduction to Roanoke's neighborhoods. Walnut Avenue is a residential street and not a major transportation route, but it is a valuable gateway to the city. The streetscape along Walnut Avenue showcases a well-developed, healthy Roanoke neighborhood. Street enhancements outlined on page 21 would improve the Walnut Avenue corridor. In addition, appropriate signage would help direct visitors and promote Roanoke's unique attractions (*Vision 2001-2020*, pg.89).

I-73

During the initial neighborhood workshops in the fall of 2003, participants expressed their opposition for the proposed I-73 route through southeast Roanoke. In March of 2004, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) announced that the new proposed I-73 alignment would not run through southeast Roanoke, rather it would follow the I-581/220 corridor through the city. In the final workshop held in May, participants stated reservations of the permanency of the current route and communicated concerns that the route may still be changed or altered to directly affect the neighborhood. The neighborhood continues to support City Council's preference of the 581/220 alignment.

Although the new route will not have a direct impact on the neighborhood, the close proximity of the proposed alignment may increase noise and air pollution. There may be an opportunity to reduce the negative impacts to the neighborhood through "Context Sensitive Design." The idea of Context Sensitive Design is promoted by the Federal Highway Administration as an approach to make the project work better within existing communities.

Flood Reduction

Flooding is a concern among residents in the low-lying portions of the neighborhood. Arbor and Arbutus Avenues, as well as along Piedmont Street have experienced flooding problems.

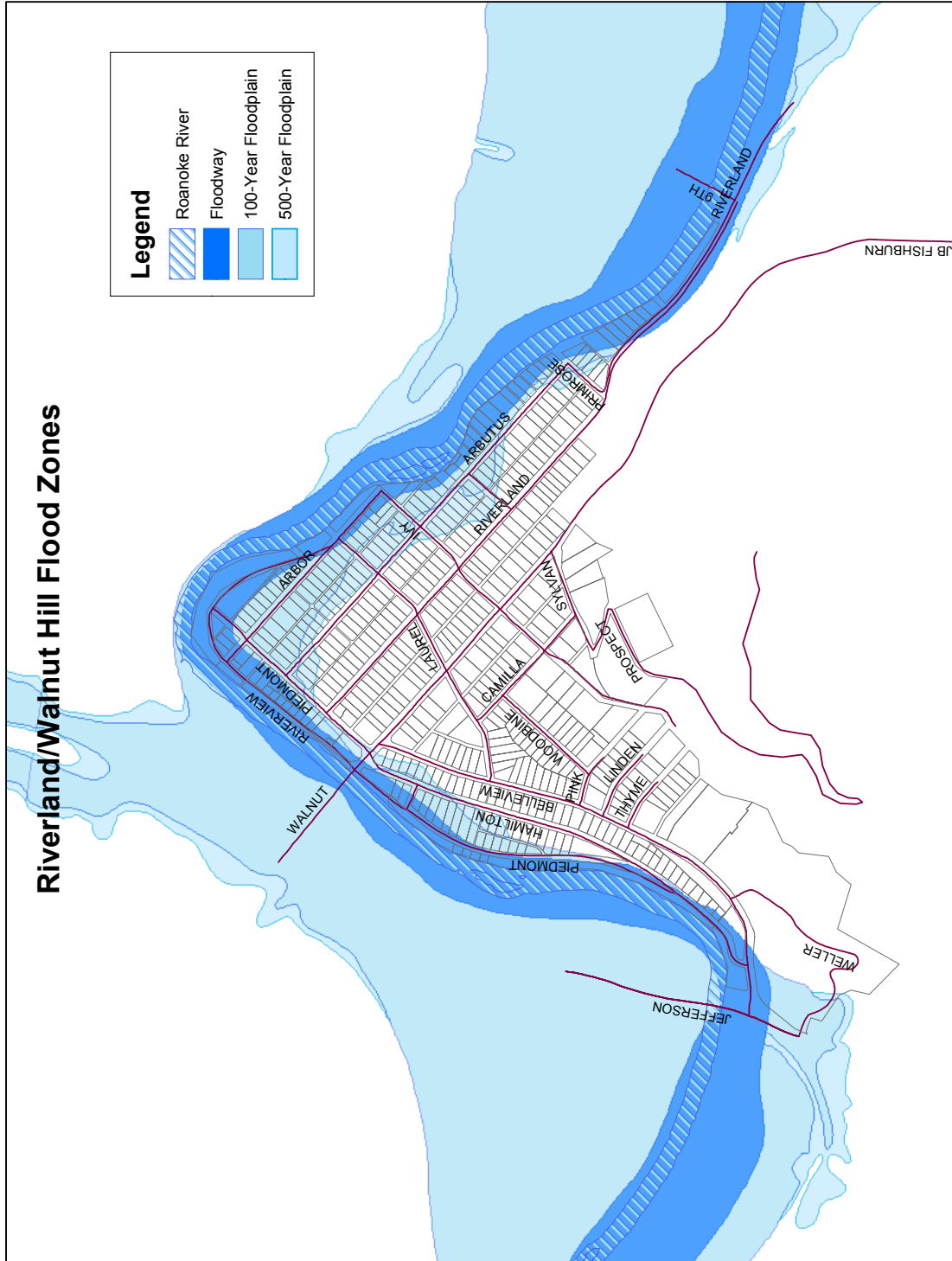
The City of Roanoke offers owners within the floodway information about their lot necessary to obtain insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, in a joint effort with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the city has launched the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project. The project is aimed at reducing annual flooding damage by 50% along the Roanoke River. The neighborhood is included in Phase I from the Vinton town line at the Roanoke Water Pollution Control Plant to Wasena Park. Construction plans, land acquisition, and utility relocation are underway, although federal funding is pending.

Also included in this project is a 10-mile recreation trail. The channelization project will benefit the region beyond limiting flood damage. It will increase the recreational opportunities along the river, stabilize the riverfront, and encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Roanoke River: Shown here is a swollen river with Piedmont Street running west in the upper left corner.



Riverland/Walnut Hill Flood Zones



Public Services

Transit service

Overall, the area has excellent coverage by the Valley Metro bus service. There are two routes that run through the neighborhood and are within a short walk for most residents.

Police

The Police Department divides the city into 14 districts. Riverland/Walnut Hill neighborhood is in district 3, along with the Franklin Road/Colonial Avenue Corridor, South Roanoke and Southern Hills neighborhoods. Over the last three years, calls for service have remained proportionally consistent in the neighborhood. The number of calls comprise one-third of all calls in district 3. Larceny generates the most calls for service from the public. Disorder calls have been on the rise over the last three years: it is the only category of offense to have increased each year during this time period.

Fire/EMS

Fire Station 11 is located at the 3-way intersection of Rutrough Road, Bennington Street, and Riverland Road in the Riverdale neighborhood. It houses the Engine 11 crew and is the location of a regional training facility. Fire Station 8 is located on Crystal Spring Avenue in the South Roanoke neighborhood and houses the Engine 8 crew.



Code Enforcement

Nuisance abatement and other code violation issues are not as widespread as in other parts of the city. Most code enforcement cases are concentrated in areas with a higher density of units and along the main corridors, such as Walnut Avenue and Riverland Road. During the workshops, residents said that better enforcement of codes dealing with outdoor storage and inoperable vehicles is needed. Residents and the neighborhood watch organization, Riverland Alert Neighbors, should continue to identify and report code violations.

Solid Waste Management

The Division of Solid Waste Management provides collection of residential refuse, bulk and brush, and recycling. Trash collection for the neighborhood is primarily along the street. The narrower streets and hilly topography provides challenging pick-ups for the truck drivers. Residents expressed concerns of containers being left for extended periods of time on busier streets. The city may need to consider more proactive enforcement of the trash can placement codes. Many containers are left on the street beyond the allotted time period of 7:00 AM the following morning after pick-up. A reminder notice may be needed for residents.

Quality of Life

Parks and Recreation



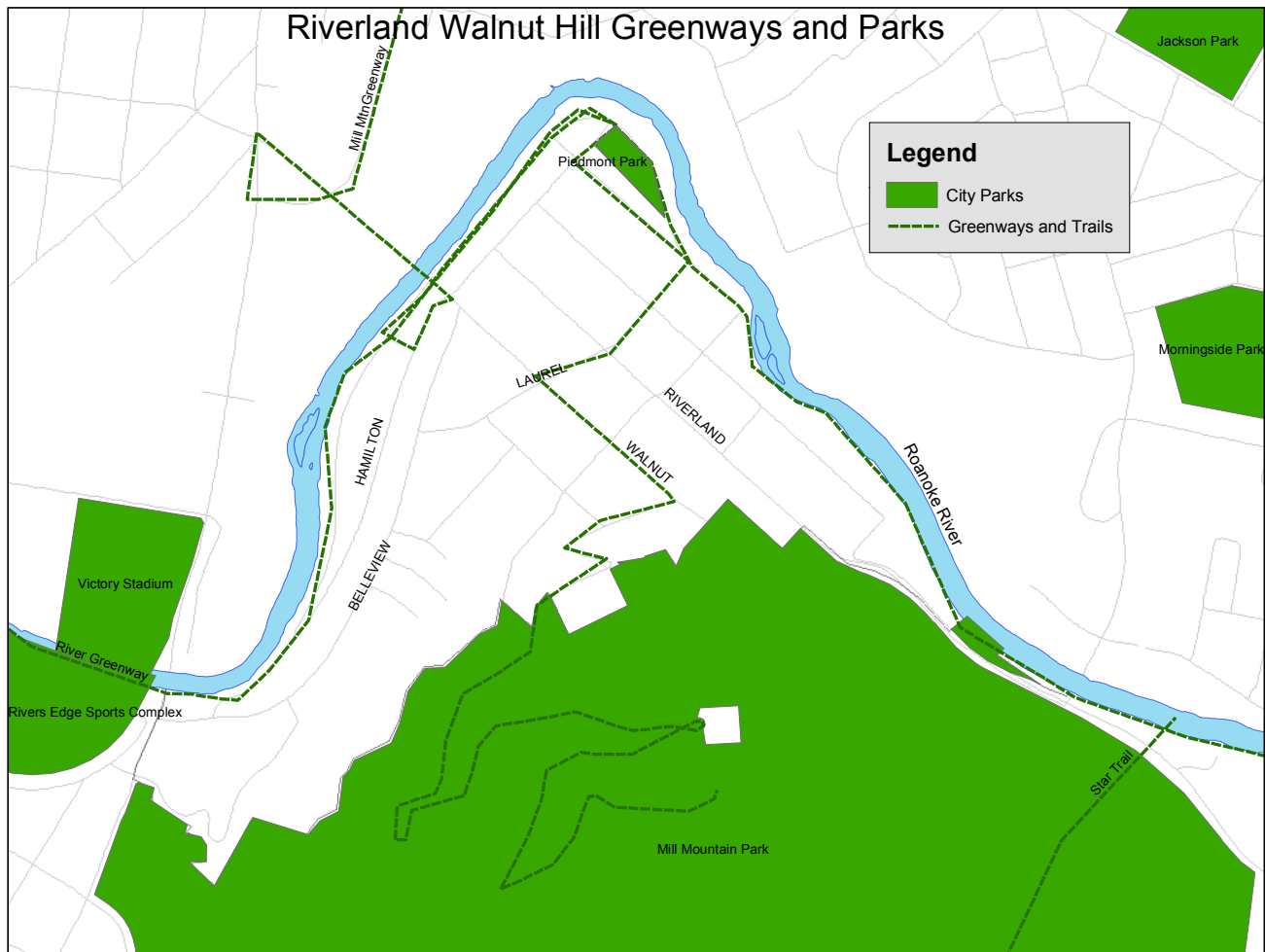
(above) A young resident waits to catch a ball in the field. (below) A trellis and benches in the park offer a pleasant sitting area.



Piedmont Park is a four-acre neighborhood park situated along the Roanoke River. It is within a five-minute walk of most homes and features a playground, picnic area, and a small open field. In September, 2003, the city completed a small parking lot and added a trellis as part of the improvements to the Mill Mountain Greenway. The improvements also complement the future construction of the Roanoke River Greenway, part of the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project. The parking lot will function as a place for the wider community to access both greenways and will most likely result in greater use of the park. With an established parking lot and increased usage, the park may require more frequent maintenance. In the public workshops, residents suggested installing a basketball court in Piedmont Park. The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (May 2000) recommended the installation of a half-size basketball court due to the limited open space in the park.

Residents benefit from other parks that are in close proximity to the neighborhood. To the west of the neighborhood are the Rivers Edge Sports Complex and Maher Fields. Also to the west, adjacent to the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital is the Crystal Spring Park featuring six tennis courts. Morningside and Jackson Parks provide open space and recreational opportunities. Mill Mountain Park, which covers most of Mill Mountain, features excellent hiking and recreational opportunities and great views of the Star City and the surrounding areas. One established trail is the Mill Mountain Star Trail that is 1.7 miles and climbs steadily from the Riverland Road parking lot across from the AEP substation to the Mill Mountain star. The park also features the Mill Mountain Zoo and Mill Mountain Discovery Center.

Prospect Street (the old Mill Mountain toll road) is part of the Mill Mountain Greenway and is heavily used for walking and biking. The greenway has increased parking demand in the area. Small parking lots designated for greenway users and/or permitted parking for residents only may be warranted.



Health

The neighborhood is well-served by medical facilities. Once planned renovations are completed, the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital will be the second largest in the state of Virginia. There are numerous medical clinics and doctor's offices in Old Southwest and along the Franklin Road corridor. The Presbyterian Center on Jamison Avenue provides periodic health and immunization clinics for residents of the neighborhood. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Roanoke Valley, on 9th Street, along with the Delta Dental Plan of Virginia sponsor the program, "Smart Smiles." "Smart Smiles" provides regular check-ups and transportation to eligible children who lack insurance or are underinsured.

Mill Mountain Star Trail: One of several trails in close proximity to the neighborhood.



Recommendations

Recommended Policies and Actions

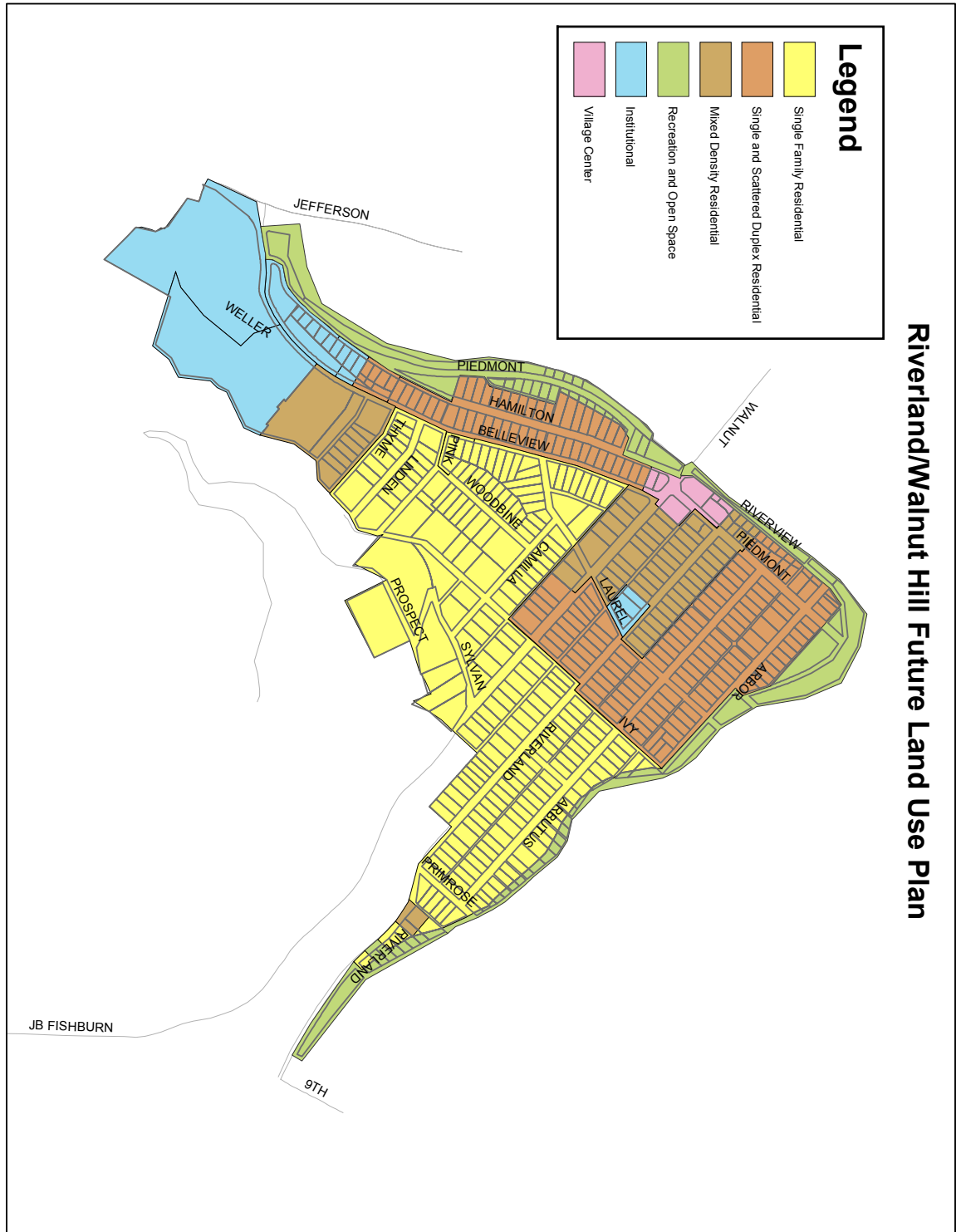
Recommendations are organized by the Plan Elements (community design, residential development, etc). Recommendations take the form of "policies" or "actions." Policies are principles or ways of doing things that guide future decisions. Generally, policies are ongoing. Actions are projects or tasks that can be completed and have a definite end.

Future Land Use

The future land use map is the most important recommendation of this plan. It specifies how future development should take place. Zoning is the principal tool that is used to implement the future land use plan. Some of the current zoning is not consistent with the future land use plan, so the plan recommends changes in zoning so that future development will be consistent with the future land use plan.

The future land use map graphically illustrates many of the plan's recommendations.

Riverland/Walnut Hill Future Land Use Plan



Community Design Policies

Future development: New development should generally follow the traditional neighborhood model prescribed by *Vision 2001-2020*.

Village center: Commercial activity will be focused in the village center. Uses in village centers should be small-scale, neighborhood-oriented businesses.

Building location: To encourage a pedestrian environment and desirable streetscape, any new buildings in the village center should be placed close to the street, immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Parking should be placed to the side or rear of the building.

Incompatible land uses: Commercial and utility uses should have as minimal impact as possible on adjoining residential areas in terms of visibility, noise, and air quality. Land uses should be compatible with the surrounding natural environment, specifically Roanoke River and Mill Mountain.

Walnut Avenue Gateway: Ensure that the Walnut Avenue corridor is an attractive gateway into Roanoke's neighborhoods.

Street trees: Arterial streets and the village center should maximize tree canopies. Mature trees with substantial canopies are an important part of a well-designed street. Preferably, they should be in the planting strip between the sidewalk and the street to create separation between pedestrians and motor vehicles. If the planting strips are too narrow, trees may be planted in curb extensions or another location within the public right-of-way.

Walnut Avenue Bridge: Maintain upkeep of the Walnut Avenue Bridge and preserve its historically significant features. Ensure the bridge is safe for pedestrian, as well as for vehicular traffic.

Flood reduction: Support efforts to reduce flooding and potential damage to personal property.

Community Design Actions

Install curb and gutter: Install curb and gutter where needed on arterial streets such as Riverland Road and Belleview Avenue.

Walnut Avenue Bridge: Nominate the bridge for the National Register of Historic Places.

Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project: Support the Roanoke River channelization project to minimize the risk of flooding privately-owned properties.

Zoning: Adjust zoning patterns to correspond to and implement the future land use map.



Belleview Avenue: curb and gutter could better define this portion of the street.

Walnut Avenue Bridge: Flower baskets hang from the light posts during the summer months.



Residential Development Policies

Housing maintenance: Housing maintenance codes will be strictly and aggressively enforced.

Zoning patterns: Zoning patterns will support housing revitalization and desired future residential land use patterns and encourage the preservation of single-family housing.

Residential design: Ensure compatibility of new residential development with existing development.

Residential Development Actions

Zoning changes: Support zoning changes to better regulate parking in front yards.

Rehabilitation District: Consider expansion of the rehabilitation district into eligible areas of the neighborhood.

Design guidelines: Determine whether the entire neighborhood or a portion of the neighborhood is eligible for inclusion in the Neighborhood Design District Overlay to ensure that new construction is compatible with the traditional design of existing development. (dependent on passage of new zoning ordinance)



New Construction: A newer home that demonstrates positive design features, such as the walkway and the pitch of the roof.

Economic Development Policies

Village center: Encourage a vibrant village center in terms of appropriate form, scale, and activity.

Economic Development Actions

Zoning: Map zoning patterns to allow medium-density residential development in and around the village center.

Improve streetscapes: Implement streetscape treatment in the village center consistent with suggestions outlined in the Infrastructure Section.



A view of the Village Center from the corner of Walnut Avenue and Piedmont Street

Infrastructure Policies

Village center public improvements: Special attention will be given to the quality of public street spaces in village centers. Distinguishing enhancements such as crosswalks, street furniture, street trees, and other public improvements will define the village center.

Streetscapes: Streetscapes should be well-maintained, attractive and functional for pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle traffic. Traditional neighborhood streets should have urban amenities such as sidewalks and curb and gutter.

Street width: Streets should be kept at minimum width necessary to accommodate vehicular traffic and on-street parking.

Infrastructure Actions

Develop site-specific plans: Develop plans for the Walnut Avenue gateway and the neighborhood's village center.

Improve streetscapes: Implement improvements consistent with suggestions outlined in the Infrastructure Section on the following priority streets:

- Riverland Road
- Walnut Avenue
- Belleview Avenue
- Laurel Street
- Hamilton Terrace

Develop site specific plans for priority streets if needed.

Public Service Policies

Appearance and security: Roanoke will use multi-departmental approaches to make each neighborhood clean and safe.

Housing maintenance and nuisance abatement: Roanoke will aggressively enforce housing maintenance codes and use public nuisance abatement ordinances to compel compliance. Encourage citizen participation in the identification of code violations.

Open and functional alleys: Zoning regulations will encourage the use of alleys for access to parking in rear. Unused/undeveloped alleys and streets should be vacated, with the land being conveyed to adjoining property owners.

Public Service Actions

Distribute code enforcement information: Distribute code enforcement information, such as flyers and brochures, to citizens to encourage the reporting of violations.

Inspections and clean-up: Regularly inspect alleys and streets, and coordinate quick clean-up of problem areas.



Alleys: This alley demonstrates that an alley does not need to be paved to be functional.

Quality of Life Policies

Parking: Encourage Mill Mountain Greenway users to park in designated parking areas or on-street spaces.

Recreational opportunities: Increase recreational usage of the area along the Roanoke River.

Quality of Life Actions

Examine parking demand: Examine the demand and neighborhood's desire to designate parking areas for Mill Mountain Greenway users. Consider residential parking permit program if needed. Consider signs directing people to appropriate parking as well.

Reduce speeding: Reduce speeding by implementing traffic-calming street designs and regular enforcement efforts.

Increase recreational activities at Piedmont Park: Increase recreational uses of Piedmont Park. Consider installing a half-sized basketball court.

Crime prevention education: Continue efforts to educate residents and stakeholders on better ways to secure their personal property and welfare.

Complete Roanoke River Greenway: Complete the Roanoke River Greenway as part of the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Plan to provide a formal path for exercising and enjoying the riverfront.

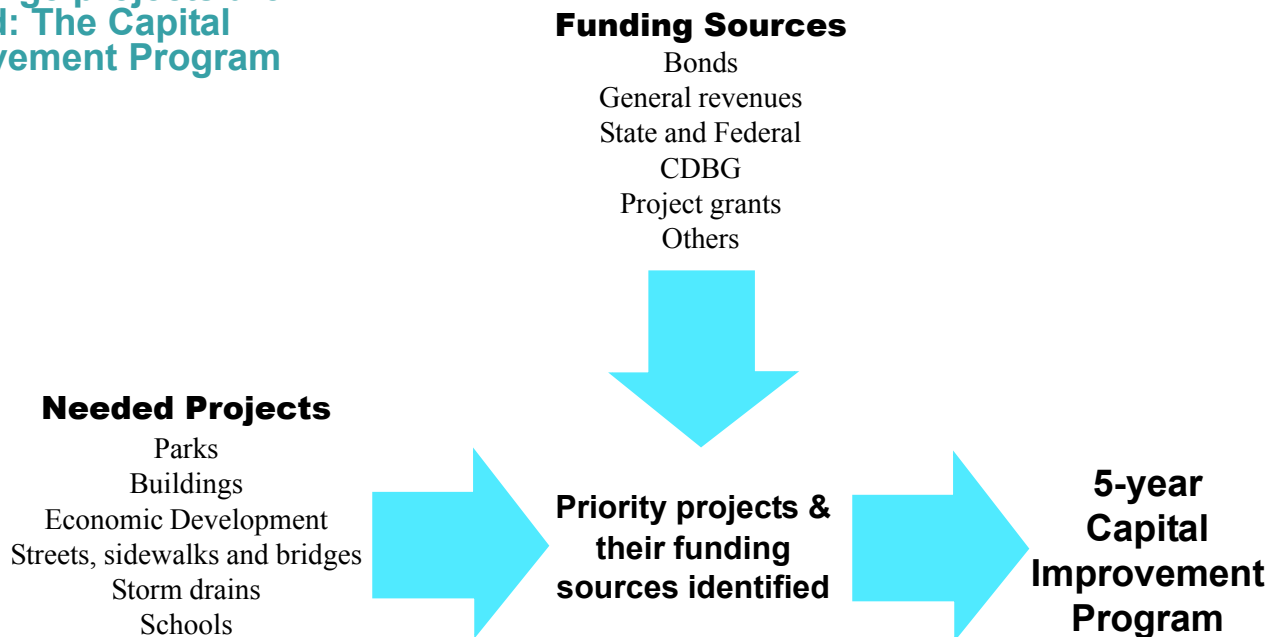
Implementation

Funding

Funding for major infrastructure projects is generally provided through the city's Capital Improvement Program. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including CDBG, transportation funding, state and federal funds, and general revenue. The Capital Improvement Program is developed by identifying needed projects and matching them with potential funding sources. Each project is reviewed and ranked in terms of priority.

The chart on the following page identifies major projects, their time frame, the lead agency or department, and potential sources of funding. The cost of most projects such as streetscape improvements cannot be determined until more detailed planning is completed.

How large projects are funded: The Capital Improvement Program



Actions, time frames, participants, and potential funding

ACTIONS	1	2	3	4	5	Ongoing	Lead Agency	Potential Funding Sources
Zoning changes	*						PBD	PBD operating budget
Install sidewalk and curb		*	*	*	*		PW	TEA-21, bonds, PW capital account
Nominate historically eligible district			*				PBD	PBD operating budget
Nominate Walnut Avenue Bridge		*					PBD	PBD operating budget
Determine eligibility for a rehabilitation district and neighborhood design district overlay	*	*					PBD	PBD operating budget
Improve streetscapes			*	*	*		PW	TEA-21, Bond, PW operating budget
Regularly inspect alleys, streets, and properties						*		PW operating budget
Develop site-specific streetscape plans for the Walnut Avenue gateway and the village center				*	*		PBD PW	PBD operating budget PW operating budget
Determine parking solution for Mill Mountain Greenway users		*					P&R	P&R operating budget PBD operating budget
Increase recreational activities in Piedmont Park						*	P&R	P&R operating budget
Reduce speeding through enforcement and traffic-calming					*	*	PD, PBD, PW	PBD, PD, & PW operating budgets
Crime Prevention Education		*					PD	PD operating budget
Roanoke River flood reduction and greenway project			*	*	*		PW	PW capital account U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
Distribute code enforcement information						*	HNS	HNS operating budget

Abbreviations:

ED = Roanoke Economic Development Department

HNS = Roanoke Housing and Neighborhood Services

PBD = Roanoke Planning Building and Development

PD = Roanoke Police Department

P&R = Roanoke Parks and Recreation

PW = Roanoke Public Works

TEA-21 = Transportation Enhancement Act (federal transportation funding)

Acknowledgments

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